

amount of light, to range rather with white than blue or red. It was also noticed that when minims were used in contrast, their tones should agree: thus a deep red requires a deep green, as may be observed in different flowers, and there may be a contrast of tones of the same colour, as in daisies of deep green upon a light one, or red upon chocolate—as in examples from Wells cathedral—or in nature, in the acorns and young shoots against the foliage of the oak. It was thought, regarding the origin of these decorations, that many were imitated from hangings, tapestries, &c., in churches, as some panels of diaper work have been found with loops on the upper edge, and, as it were, hanging before the rectilinear ornament derived from the jointing of the stonework.

The next paper was announced to be on March 28th, by Mr. Gooch, upon "Public Abattoirs."

IMPROVEMENT OF LODGING-HOUSES.

It is not more than two or three years, we should think, since we had to complain repeatedly, not only of the indifference of our contemporaries of the metropolitan press generally to all our efforts in favour of an improvement in the construction of houses occupied by separate families as lodging-houses, but even of a positive opposition in the shape of leading articles and pamphlets, in which little else than prejudice and misapprehension assumed the form and place of reason and fact. It is not a little gratifying, therefore, to find our leading and potent conditor, the *Times*, taking up the cudgels on our side, and destroying all future chance of further success to prejudice and error on this subject.

"A foreigner," says the *Times*, "from any European metropolis, will learn with surprise on visiting this country that, with the exception of one or two edifices, for which we have to thank a band of ardent philanthropists, there are no such things here as several suites of apartments for as many separate households, architecturally arranged in one building. He will hear that the window-tax for any such building mounts up as rapidly and as ruinously as it would for a nobleman's mansion, while colleges and inns of court are only saved from this penalty by special exemptions. He will notice that, as a general rule, every household, contrary to all the suggestions of economy, occupies its separate portion of the earth's surface; and he will find that where the very great convenience or overpowering necessity of a different usage has brought several families under one roof, and into one staircase, it is in the case of old mansions, which, as thus occupied, are almost worthless to their proprietors, costly to their occupiers, most inconvenient for the purpose, rendered still more uncomfortable to reduce the window-tax, and profitable only to a low and conspicuous class of hucksters, who rent such houses cheap, in order to sublet them high, and who concern themselves as little about the character as they do about the comfort of their inmates. Such is the spurious and the only form in which nests of lodgings for the poor are found in this country. Nay, the very word 'apartment,' which, in the French original, means a separate suite of rooms sufficient for one family, has lost its meaning in this country, and, by a singular and unmeaning corruption, has come to be used for any one room."

But it is not foreigners alone that may be surprised at this: in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other northern towns of our own empire, there are numerous streets of large buildings composed of suites of rooms, each suite as separate and independent as if it stood on a pavement in place of in a "common stair." This system, we have often said, is what the metropolis must now adopt. It has already spread far beyond all reasonable bounds along the surface of the earth, and now, like the great Babel in antitype, it must aspire heavenwards—it must increase in height as heretofore in length and breadth. The very value of the ground impels towards this result.

The improvement of dwellings for the poor has formed a subject of discussion

in the Commons within the last ten days, on a motion by Lord Ashley for leave to bring in a Bill to encourage the construction of lodging-houses for the working classes. Leave was not only granted, but a most favourable feeling evinced towards the object in view during the discussion that ensued upon Lord Ashley's disclosure of the present order of things, on which he enlarged rather than on any statement of his views and hopes for the future. In reply to a remark of Lord C. Hamilton, Mr. Labouchere said he hoped shortly to effect a great reduction in the expenses of charters for building associations.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

We have just had another of those harping and interminable "discussions" which are over and anon coming on in the Commons about Mr. Barry and his progress—his doings too much, and his doings too little—his deviations either to the right hand or to the left of that mean line of direction, whatever it may be, resultant from the sum total of those antagonistic forces of opinion and of resolution to which he is ever exposed. The laugh was lately against him because the turncocks supplied too little water to the reservoirs: now it is reiterated because the supply is too great—"a larger supply, indeed, than would be afforded to a town of 14,000 inhabitants." Before, on several occasions, most expensive amendments and improvements of the original plans were ordered by the House: now, nothing but grumbling is heard why the expense exceeds the original estimates. A particular style was voted by the House in the outset: now the characteristic and requisite details which go to make up that very style, and constitute one of its essential features, are objected to. Mr. Barry has introduced some ornamental shield work, &c., in the new House of Commons, to make it consistent in some slight measure with the richer details of the House of Lords. Consequently Mr. Barry is worried because he does not paint this shield work without colour, or because the House is not like "the unadorned one" himself. Had it been consistent with propriety of style or correlation to make it perfectly plain in the face of such a rich display as that in the House of Lords, doubtless it would have been represented as a deliberate insult to this distinguished Commons of this Kingdom. As it is, gilding is all very well for the Lords, but the Commons are far above all that sort of thing. There is gilding in the decoration of the House of Lords; but gingerbread is sometimes gilded with Dutch metal: ergo, the decorations of the House of Lords are mere "gingerbread gilding." And as the decorations of the House of Commons have some such affinity to those of the House of Lords in point of richness, as the Commons themselves may be supposed to have to the Lords in point of wealth, Sir D. L. Evans rises "to call the attention of the House to the so-called interior decoration of the new House of Commons, persisted in by the architect in opposition to the declared wishes of the members of the House." A discussion thereupon ensues, when it turns out that "the House" never "declared" any "wishes" on the subject at all! Mr. Barry snappened the work on its merely being objected to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer,—"as likely, we presume, to form a peg to hang such a cloak upon as that form may be called which the protean prejudice of certain members now assumes." "Heraldry," Mr. Barry remarks in his defence, "is absolutely essential to the character and the full expression of the Tudor style of design adopted by Parliament, and the only means of giving historic interest to it." Besides, the House had actually voted 9,600*l.* for this very purpose! And all that Mr. Barry has done, it is said, does not exhaust the foregoing decorative liberality and penchant for display of his not generally so extravagant paymasters. Mr. Greene quaintly questioned the propriety of "scrapping it all off again," but "of course the House might exercise its pleasure on that point." They will not convert all

the gilding scraped off, however, into much of the solid gold granted for the purpose of laying it on.

FREE ADMISSION TO ST. PAUL'S.

The days of the twopenny exhibition are at last really numbered. On 1st May, as announced in the Commons by Sir George Grey, the area of the cathedral is to be thrown open to the public, and the twopenny abolished.

AFTER a contest for twelve years, we have at length, thanks to the support of the public press, obtained the suppression of the twopenny admission fee to St. Paul's Cathedral,—that is, free admission to the level interior of the edifice, with its monuments, &c. As a member of the Society for obtaining free admission to public edifices, I have all along noticed, and am now grateful for, the unceasing energy and interest you have shown in our cause, and congratulate you on the result. Some persons may perhaps think that we have not obtained enough, and that we ought not to rest until we have obtained similar exemption from the other fees charged for visiting the whispering gallery, and other portions of the magnificent structure, up and down stairs; but having obtained the principal advantage, as much by discretion as by seal, let us look most to the preservation of what we have gained, and discreetly consider how far it would be advantageous, on all sides, to facilitate further accommodation to the public by a reduction of these charges. That boon will best grow out of the good and proper use the people make of the present acquisition. It therefore behoves every one, not only to behave with propriety himself, but to discontinue and prevent any impropriety in others. Few, indeed, are likely to deserve reproof, but a very few instances may bring discredit on the public at large: it is, therefore, necessary to watch the least tendency to indecorum.

G. F.

MASTERS AND WORKMEN.

IMPORTANT TO BUILDERS.—ENGLAND. AUSTIN.

THIS was a suit instituted in the Marylebone County Court, by the plaintiff, a journeyman plasterer, against the defendant, a builder in an extensive way of business in Gloucester-road, Paddington, to recover the sum of one shilling and three pence, which the plaintiff claimed under the following circumstances:—It appeared from the evidence that the plaintiff had been in the defendant's employ six weeks, and that at the conclusion of the day's work on Tuesday, the 16th of March, he and his brother workmen were discharged without any previous notice. On the following morning they went to collect their tools at the building and requested payment of a quarter of a day's wages, which was refused, and hence the present proceedings. Mr. Herring, who appeared as solicitor for the plaintiff, observed that although the claim sought to be recovered was so trifling in amount, the question involved a principle of very considerable importance. There were thirteen similar cases against the defendant, and the issue of the present case was most important, not merely as affecting those cases, but to the whole of the building trade. He (Mr. Herring) was instructed that it was the custom of the trade to pay workmen a quarter of a day's wages upon summary dismissal, and if he established that fact, his client would be entitled to his Honour's judgment. Two witnesses were called on the part of the plaintiff, both of whom distinctly swore that it was the custom, as stated by the plaintiff, for the masters to pay a quarter of a day's wages under the circumstances described. One of the witnesses (Fairborn) said he had received such compensation from Mr. Houston, master plasterer, of Praed-street, and from others.

Mr. Randall, of Wigmore street, attorney for Mr. Austin, contended that no such custom ever existed, and that masters could discharge their men at a moment's notice, the men having the same privilege to leave their employers; the tools being always collected by